

VALLEY VISION



Connecting Citizens, Shaping Solutions

Valley Vision Proposal

L a y i n g t h e G r o u n d w o r k

**Building a Strong Research and Technical
Foundation for the Delta Trail Planning
Process**

Connecting Citizens, Shaping Solutions



The Great California Delta Trail System

The Setting

The California State Legislature created the Delta Protection Commission (Commission) in September of 1992. As a diverse collection of stakeholders and governmental entities, it is dedicated to the preservation of the agricultural, habitat, and recreational resources of the 1150 square mile Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. In 1995, the Commission created and adopted a *Land Use and Resource Management Plan for the Primary Zone of the Delta*, as mandated in the Delta Protection Act. The Commission works collaboratively with local and regional governments, state and federal agencies and Delta stakeholders to proactively protect, preserve and enhance the Delta's resources and natural beauty. It also addresses urban growth through the inclusion of the Commission's Management Plan in the general plans of Delta counties and cities.




Recognizing the uniqueness of the Delta, in 2006 the Legislature and Gov. Schwarzenegger approved Senate Bill 1556 (Torlakson), declaring support for the creation of The Great California Delta Trail (Delta Trail). This bill requires the Commission to "develop and adopt a plan and implementation program, including a finance and maintenance plan, for the Delta Trail." The bill further stipulates that the Delta Trail is to be a continuous regional recreational corridor that will extend around the delta, including, but not limited to, the delta's shorelines in Contra Costa, Solano, San Joaquin, Sacramento, and Yolo Counties. It will link the San Francisco Bay Trail system to the planned Sacramento River trails in Yolo and Sacramento Counties. The Delta Trail plan will include a specific route for a bicycling and hiking trail, the relationship of the route to existing and proposed park and recreational facilities and land and water trail systems, and links to existing and proposed public transportation.

Our Approach

Valley Vision is pleased to offer this proposal to take the first step in making the Delta Trail a reality. We have been involved in some of the most innovative large-scale regional planning processes in the nation, and we can leverage this experience in our work on the Delta Trail planning process. We employ a methodology that respects and maximizes the role of citizens and government to create sustained results. In partnership with the Commission staff, we will work to ensure that the Delta Trail planning process progresses smoothly from the information gathering phase through collaborative planning and on-the-ground implementation.

Commission staff has already completed some preliminary work, such as the hosting of four Delta Trails concept meetings. The meetings were designed to identify the opportunities and concerns about the Delta Trail of four major stakeholder groups, including agriculture, recreation, private business, and local planning. This provided an early awareness of the issues that need to be further explored and addressed. Likewise, Commission staff has started sharing information and building awareness about the Delta Trail through meetings with local governmental agencies and interested organizations.

We propose three distinct project phases to creating a plan and implementation program for the Delta Trail:

-  *Phase I: Laying the Groundwork* Projects that start from a strong base of information have a much greater chance of success. Valley Vision and Commission staff will gather the needed information that will serve as the foundation of the Delta Trail planning process.
-  *Phase II: Creating the Vision* Engage the stakeholders, technical experts and key government officials in creating both an inspiring vision and a detailed plan that are embraced by all.
-  *Phase III: Implementing the Vision* Assemble the resources and identify the policy changes that are needed to support the physical construction and long-term maintenance of the Delta Trail.

Phase I Activities

Laying the Groundwork

The first phase of creating the Delta Trail involves *Laying the Groundwork* for the planning process. During Phase I, Valley Vision will create the detailed plan that is needed to complete Phase II.

This proposal provides both an overview of Valley Vision’s tasks during Phase I, as well as the concurrent activities of Commission staff, in order to capture the full scope of the activities that will take place during this time period. The work of Valley Vision and the Commission will be closely connected to ensure that information gathering is completed in a coordinated and consistent manner, without any duplication of efforts. The overall outcomes of Phase I, considering the contributions of both organizations, are as follows:

Phase I outcomes:

- ✚ Complete all baseline activities that facilitate the development of a technical “base case.” Base case information includes maps of existing conditions, data and key information.
 - Information gathered on existing conditions and established master land use plans, including parks, trails, recreation amenities, open space and public lands. GIS database protocols established and input started (the map will be completed and verified in Phase II).
 - Connections made with local government leaders to facilitate information transfer and collect feedback on opportunities and concerns.
 - Connections are made with key stakeholder organizations that impact trails and recreation.
- ✚ All information and connections needed to develop the required Stakeholder and Technical Committees are completed, in accordance with SB 1556 (Torlakson).
 - Stakeholder map interest assessment completed.
 - Roles for COGs, potential consultants and other technical experts clarified.
 - Optimal committee structures and potential partners identified.
- ✚ Marketing and outreach on the Delta Trail continued.
- ✚ Phase II “*Creating the Vision*” process plan will be fully developed with budgets and timelines
 - Best practices researched and incorporated.
 - Technical needs identified and sourced.
 - Process to engage the public outlined.

Valley Vision Tasks

Task 1: Key Informant Interviews

The Delta Trail involves multiple jurisdictions, diverse stakeholders, and many technical considerations. Gathering the right information will be critical to a successful planning process, and Valley Vision has demonstrated the capacity to collect the needed information efficiently and effectively.

For the Delta Trail planning process, we will gather information by conducting interviews with key stakeholders. The interviews will be conducted in a series, with each round of interviews informing the next, a process that will allow us to refine our questions and determine who we need to interview. We propose to begin with the Delta Protection Commission members, which will allow the Commissioners to influence the next round of interviews. The interview process will be complete when we feel confident that we have captured all of the ideas and opinions that are pertinent to the Delta Trail, as evidenced by reaching a plateau of new information being obtained from the interviews. Between 65 and 70 interviews will be sufficient to carry out this phase of the project.

Through the interview process, we will determine who are the key stakeholders and what are the important issues—information that is instrumental to the Delta Trail planning process. Other anticipated outcomes include:

- Defining the composition and role of the Stakeholder Committee;
- Discovering ways that the planning process can link existing recreation and trail planning efforts at the local level;
- Gauging the level of support for the Delta Trail;
- Furthering the cause of the Delta Trail by spreading the word;
- Uncovering issues, ideas, opportunities, and concerns that will impact the Delta Trail;
- Identifying stakeholders that are currently unknown to the Commission;
- Compiling information on distinct visions, specific ideas, and technical insights held by various stakeholders.

As part of Task One, we will present preliminary findings to the Commission and refine our final steps to meet needs that arise at that time.

Task Two: Identify Best Practices in Planning Major Trails

Valley Vision will draw on the lessons learned from projects similar in scope and complexity, and both report on our findings and integrate the most relevant ideas into our recommendations for Phase II. Two examples of projects that we will research are the California Coastal Trail and the San Francisco Bay Trail. We propose to research these and up to two others. Decades of experience has produced knowledge, wisdom and expertise that can be utilized to avoid costly mistakes, reduce planning and implementation cycles, and ensure that the Delta Trail plan integrates the best practices of other similar initiatives. We will produce a Best Practices Report and present findings to the Commission.

Task Three: Define Technical Needs and Options

Detailed technical information will establish the framework for decision-making and will build a strong foundation for the Delta Trail planning process. Planning for the trail will involve five counties, dozens of cities and local districts, and many branches of local, regional, state, and federal government. It will also involve reaching out to private landowners, and environmental and recreational organizations, agencies, and industries. Through our outreach efforts and consultations with technical experts, we will define the technical needs to successfully complete Phase II and options for cost-effectively securing the needed technical support. We will identify any tasks that would require the hiring of consultants and define their scope of work. We will

also investigate any interactive technology, such as keypad polling, interactive planning software, etc., for gathering public input. Ultimately, our findings will help us define the composition and role of the Technical Advisory Committee, whose expertise will be essential during the completion of Phase II.

We will identify the technical roles of the three Councils of Governments, including SACOG, ABAG, and SJCOG. We will work closely with them to clarify their degrees of interest, willingness to invest resources, and level of engagement in the Delta Trail. Similarly, if other potential important partners emerge during the research process, we will identify the roles they may play in later phases of the planning process.

Task Four: Create Linkages with Parallel Efforts and Potential Partners

As we gather information, it is inevitable that we will discover resources, related initiatives, and potential partners that can and should be included in the Delta Trail planning process. By initiating communication and forming relationships, we can start to build linkages with these entities and make their efforts known to the Commission. We will identify where efforts overlap and begin the process of negotiating roles. We will then create for the Commission a “stakeholder map” with the overlaps and potential partners identified.

Task Five: Develop and Refine Project Plan

Task Five will be to synthesize the vast array of stakeholder input and technical information. Using the methodologies from the **Blueprint Project** as our beginning template, we will outline the best way to gather input from thousands of engaged citizens and integrate this information into a concise, comprehensive vision and detailed plan customized to the unique circumstances and needs of the Delta. Our plan will define key policy issues and provide pathways for implementation. In the end, the Commission will possess its own “blueprint” for moving the Delta Trail planning process forward and making the dream of many a reality.

Delta Protection Commission Tasks

Commission staff will execute the following tasks during the same timeline established for Valley Vision’s Phase I:

- Identify all existing public trails and publicly owned land (including nonprofits) in the Delta region.
- Gather land use master plans and trail master plans to identify existing and planned trails, parks and open space.
- Establish a GIS database using best practices used by other regional trail project managers, and begin to input the gathered data.
- Update and maintain the Delta Trail web site as a communication and a marketing tool for the Delta Trail.
- Identify potential funding sources, for planning, design, construction and maintenance of the trail.

An Overview of Valley Vision

Valley Vision is a nonprofit association of people and organizations working to secure the social, environmental and economic health of the Sacramento Region. Founded in 1994, we are an “action tank” committed to regional problem-solving and objective research for sound decision-making. To affect change, Valley Vision serves as a neutral convener of a broad cross-section of the Sacramento region’s leadership, including business, government, agriculture, the environmental community, organized labor, education, utilities and the nonprofit sector. We also partner with organizations in other regions to affect change on a wider geographic scale.

Our partners value working with us because we bring a boundary-crossing point of view. Our work provides us with opportunities to see connections and build linkages between public health, land use, transportation, education, and economic development. Some examples of Valley Vision’s recent successes include:

Planning on a Regional Scale

Valley Vision brings a strong track-record of regional-scale planning projects. We partnered with the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) to complete the **Blueprint Project**. This effort engaged over 5,000 citizens throughout the region and employed innovative modeling technology that gave instant feedback on policy choices to produce smarter, broadly-supported planning outcomes. The result: an integrated “blueprint” for our region that guides transportation and land-use decision-making over the next 50 years, factoring in key regional considerations like air quality and open space. Nearly every jurisdiction in the six-county SACOG region endorsed or approved the project. It also won numerous awards, including the National Award for Smart Growth Achievement from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. This project model will transfer well to the Great California Delta Trail Project and help turn a project into a movement.

The Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) 2035, the regional transportation strategy for the next three decades, is the next phase in the **Blueprint Project** and the first MTP to be integrated into the Sacramento Region’s land-use strategy. Valley Vision worked in cooperation with SACOG to conduct public outreach throughout the six-county region and to provide information about the MTP process to the community at large. Valley Vision was successful in getting over 3,000 “citizen planners” to participate in community workshops and one large transportation forum held simultaneously in eight separate locations around the region. A large array of other community members were also engaged in the MTP process through Valley Vision’s targeted outreach designed to reach diverse populations that otherwise might not have been involved. Valley Vision and SACOG were successful in their intent to hear from a large cross-section of residents in the Sacramento Region in order to ensure real community input on a transportation plan that will, ultimately, affect the region’s quality of life.

In our current **Regional Open Space Project** Valley Vision is partnering with a group of environmental, business, planning and regulatory organizations to gather and develop important information about the status of our rural landscape. With technical assistance from the Sacramento Area Council of Governments, Valley Vision is creating an up-to-date inventory and GIS map of all regional lands that are protected for non-urban uses in El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo and Yuba counties. Following this first-of-its-kind inventory, the partners and Valley Vision plan to work with a wide range of stakeholders – from local land-use

and wildlife planners and conservation leaders to the development community and many others – to identify how best to address open space issues at a six-county scale.

Collaborative Data-Driven Reports

Valley Vision has significant, relevant experience collaborating with multiple partners to develop reports about the Sacramento region. In 2004 Valley Vision partnered with several agencies, including the Community Services Planning Council, to develop the **2004 Sacramento Region Quality of Life Report**. In each update of the 42 indicators in the *Quality of Life Report* Valley Vision strives to innovate; the 2004 report emphasized racial and ethnic demographic data and county-specific data to highlight regional disparities. In addition, our highly successful communications plan for this report included distribution of 5,000 copies to elected officials and opinion leaders, a news conference that generated significant media coverage, presentations to community and leadership groups throughout the region, and ongoing availability of the report through the web and CD-ROM.

Complex Collaborative Initiatives:

In 2005 Valley Vision successfully facilitated 34 economic development and business organizations across six counties in developing the ***Partnership for Prosperity: A Business Plan for the Sacramento Region***. This effort began with 50 stakeholder interviews and expert opinion gathering, which Valley Vision analyzed and synthesized for use as a baseline across several months of facilitated discussion and planning. Valley Vision continues to facilitate the Partnership's action teams of coalition members, ensuring the plan will not "sit on the shelf." Valley Vision also works with a communications team to craft marketing, branding, and media support.

Timeline for Phase I

Project Length: 6.5 Months

Task 1 - Key Informant Interviews	Start Date	Completed
Initial 23 Interviews with Commission Members	August 1	September 1
Interview analysis	September 1	September 8
Second Round of Interviews (estimate 25)	September 8	October 1
Interview Analysis	October 1	October 7
Third Round of Interviews (estimate 20)	October 7	November 1
Preliminary Analysis of Interviews	November 1	November 10
Check in with Commission	November 15	November 15
Final wrap up Interviews	As Scheduled	As Scheduled
Final Interview Analysis		January 15
Task 2 - Best Practices Search		
Interview Participants - Three to Four Major Trail projects	August 1	September 20
Research Methods and Study Materials	August 1	September 20
Create Final Best Practice Report	September 20	September 31
Task 3 - Technical Requirements Analysis		
Determine Role of COGS	September 15	November 15
Determine Role of Planning Firms	September 15	November 15
Develop Technical Advisory Committee Structure	September 15	November 15
Research potential mapping tools and technology	September 15	November 15
Research and inventory maps and available tools	September 15	November 15
Task 4 - Partner and Related Organization Coordination		
Meetings with Related Organizations	August 15	November 15
Negotiate Roles and Produce Stakeholder Map	September 15	December 15
Task 5 - Develop and Refine Phase II Project Plan		
Develop Phase II Plan	January 1	January 30
Check in with Key Partners	January 15	January 30
Two sets of meetings and revisions with Commission	As Scheduled	As Scheduled

Budget for Phase I

Project Budget	Labor Cost	Hard Costs	Notes
Overall Project Management			
Day to Day Project Management	\$12,150		
Bi-monthly team meetings	\$19,350		
Regular check-ins with Delta Protection Commission staff	\$5,400		
	\$34,200		
Task 1 - Key Informant Interviews			
Initial 23 Interviews with Commission Members	\$8,885	\$1,000	Materials
Interview analysis	\$2,890		
Second Round of Interviews (estimate 25)	\$7,180	\$500	Travel
Interview Analysis	\$2,775		
Third Round of Interviews (estimate 20)	\$5,500	\$500	Travel
Preliminary Analysis of Interviews	\$2,400		
Check in with Commission	\$1,620		
Final wrap up Interviews	\$2,365		
Final Interview Analysis	\$3,315		
Subtotal	\$36,930		
Task 2 - Best Practices Search			
Interview Participants - Five Major Trail projects	\$3,210	\$600	Travel
Research Methods and Study Materials	\$8,630		
Create Final Best Practice Report	\$3,910		
Subtotal	\$15,750		
Task 3 - Technical Requirements Analysis			
Determine role of COGS	\$7,900	\$1,000	Travel
Determine Role of Planning Firms	\$8,125		
Develop Technical Committee Structure	\$6,065		
Research potential mapping tools and technology	\$8,125		
Research and inventory maps and available tools	\$7,955	\$1,000	Materials
Subtotal	\$30,270		
Task 4 – Partners and Related Organization Coordination			
Meetings with Related Organizations	\$9,900	\$500	Travel
Negotiate Roles and Produce Stakeholder Map	\$8,250	\$300	Materials
Subtotal	\$18,150		
Task 5 - Develop and Refine Project Plan		\$300	
Develop Plan	\$16,900		
Check in with Key Partners	\$3,700		
Two sets of meetings and revisions with Commission	\$6,050		
Subtotal	\$26,650		
SUBTOTAL	\$161,950	\$5,700	
15% Administrative and Contingency	\$25,148		
TOTAL	\$189,798	\$195,498	